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## PVN OP 168 Excavation Report

Edward M. Schortman

*Kenyon College*

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## Site 168

Site 168 is located on the summit of a relatively flat river terrace 1.75km east/southeast of the Rio Chamelecon, 150m north of the perennial Quebrada Grande, and approximately the same distance west of the mountains that define the Naco valley's east margin. Site 171 is approximately 1.3km to the northwest whereas La Sierra is 4.5km to the northwest and across the Rio Chamelecon. The settlement's 44 structures are grouped into two distinct aggregates separated by 135m along an east-west line. The western complex contains 30 buildings tightly packed around six adjoining plazas. The southernmost of these patios is the largest, covering 20x28m of open space, most clearly defined, and bounded by the largest edifices at the center (Strs. 168-20, 23, 24, 26, and 27). A large stone, that may be the remains of an uncarved monument, is located in the northeast corner of this southern monumental plaza. The site's remaining 14 edifices are built into the western escarpment of a low line of hills that borders the river terrace on the east. The edifices comprising the eastern aggregate are more widely dispersed than their western analogues and are grouped around four relatively indistinct plazas. The one monumental edifice (Str. 168-40) found in this cluster is located on its southwest edge directly opposite the southern-most plaza in the western group.

Excavations directed by H. Mahan and T. Neff at Site 168 from April 5-19, 1988 exposed portions of eight buildings, the southern plaza surface, and the putative monument, clearing approximately 104m<sup>2</sup> in the process. An additional six test pits (each 1m<sup>2</sup>) were dug at the site by N. Ross from June 26-July 5, 1995 as part of his investigation of obsidian tool production and use (Ross 1997). In all, 110m<sup>2</sup> were cleared at Site 168 during 1988 and 1995. Most of the investigated edifices are in the western aggregate (Strs. 168-7, 11, 16, 21, 25, and 26) along with the monument and its associated plaza surface. Structures 168-32 and 40 were excavated in the eastern settlement cluster.

## Structure 168-7

Structure 168-7 lies in the northern part of the west building cluster. It, together with Str. 168-6 immediately to the north, separate two adjoining patios to the east and west. Structure 168-7 is connected by architecture to the aforementioned Str. 168-6 and Str. 168-8 on the north and southwest, respectively, whereas Strs. 168-3 and 11 are 11m and 5m across plazas to the west and east, in turn. Digging here within Subop. 168E cleared 8m<sup>2</sup> along the building's east side, excavation being carried down to maximum depths of 0.47m and 0.6m below modern ground surface within and outside architecture, respectively. One major building phase and a period of significant renovation were recognized in the course of this work overseen by H. Mahan.

## Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2	-	LCLII?
2	Str. 168-7-1st	U.1-7	-	-	LCLIII/II

### Time Span 1

The earliest activity recorded in the vicinity of Str. 168-7-1st is the deposition of S.2, a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil. Stratum 2 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.27m; its base was not encountered in Subop. 168E. The artifacts retrieved from S.2 point to a human presence in the area while this soil was accumulating.

### Time Span 2

During this interval Str. 168-7-1st was ascended by four variably well-preserved risers on its east flank (U.1, 2, 5, and 6). The basal step, U.5, projects 0.2m above the top of S.2 and is 0.85m wide. It is succeeded on the west by U.1 which ascends 0.21m above U.5's tread and runs back 0.66m to the west. Unit 6, a barely discernible construction, projects roughly 0.12m above U.1 and measures 0.82m across. Unit 2, the last riser leading to the summit, is an estimated 0.2m high and gives way to a surface composed of mixed earth and stone that was traced for 1.46m to the west (the summit's full width was not exposed). Located 0.29m and 0.8m west of U.2 are two stone lines set flush with the summit surface (U.3 and 4, respectively). Units 3 and 4 run parallel to U.2 and may represent earlier versions of the summit step-up that were expanded progressively outward to the east (from U.4 to U.3 to the last version, U.2). Time did not permit investigation of this possibility. The fill underlying and retained by Str. 168-7-1st's eastern terraces consists of small to large cobbles set in a brown earth matrix (U.7).

By TS. 2's conclusion Str. 168-7-1st was a stone-faced, earth-and-stone filled platform that stood 0.73m high and was aligned roughly 45 degrees. Four risers, ranging from 0.12-0.21m high and 0.66-0.85m wide, ascend the edifice on the east and give way to what looks to have been an ample summit surfaced with a mix of stones and earth (at least 1.46m across east-west). The summit may have been expanded gradually eastward in at least three building episodes, though this point cannot be established with the data in hand. The terrace treads consisted on a mix of earth and stones. All walls are fashioned primarily of unmodified rocks, many of which are cobbles though a few pieces of limestone were recorded. Limestone outcrops are frequent in the immediate vicinity of Site 168. At least one cut block was recorded mixed with the unshaped stones in U.4. All rocks used to fashion walls are set in a mud mortar.

### Time Span 3

Following its abandonment, Str. 168-7-1st was largely covered by the deposition of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, root-rich, dark gray-to-black soil (S.1). Stratum 1 accumulated to as much as 0.35m thick and includes within it a dense scattering of rocks fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 is densest where it overlies TS.2 architecture, the number and size of its component rocks declining eastward away from the building where it is found in S.1 and the upper 0.13m of S.2. This debris was followed for 1.98m to the east where excavations ceased.

### Structure 168-11

Structure 168-11 is in the northern portion of the settlement's western aggregate. It, and Str. 168-10, separate two plazas that run in a north-south line. Structure 168-11 is 5m east of, and across the north patio from, Str. 168-7 and 8m north on the opposite side of the southern patio from Str. 168-16. Low constructions links Str. 168-11 with Strs. 168-10 on the west and 168-12 on the east. Excavations within Subop. 168D exposed 5.1m<sup>2</sup> near the building's southeast side, digging being carried down to maximum depths of 0.9m and 1.04m below modern ground surface within and outside construction, respectively. These investigations were directed by H. Mahan and T. Neff.

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S. 3	-	
2	-	-	S.2	-	LCLI, II
3	Str. 168-11-1st	U.1, 2	-	-	LCLIII/II, III
4	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

#### Time Span 1

Deposition of S.3, a fine-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown soil, was the first activity attested to in Str. 168-11-1st's vicinity. Stratum 3 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.26m running beneath exposed portions of Str. 168-11-1st (U.1 and 2). Stratum 3's base was not encountered. The absence of cultural material derived from this layer tentatively suggests that there was no human presence in and around the site of Str. 168-11-1st while S.3 was accumulating.

#### Time Span 2

The lower 0.12-0.34m of S.2, a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, light orange-brown soil, overlies S.3 and runs under the exposed portions of TS.2 architecture. The discrepancy in S.2's thickness below U.1 and 2 seems to relate to variations in the depth of underlying S.3. Lower S.2 is rich in small to medium-size cobbles and artifacts, primarily sherds and *bajareque* fragments. The sherds especially appeared to be flat-laid, implying that they had not been significantly displaced from the where they were originally dropped. It may be, therefore, that lower S.2 represents either a sequence of old living surfaces or the remains of trash deposits that either collected gradually over time or were introduced to level ancient ground surface prior to erecting Str. 168-11-1st. In any event, TS.2 seems to mark a period of considerable human activity on the future site of this platform.

#### Time Span 3

The only portions of Str. 168-11-1st revealed in Subop. 168D are its eastern basal facing

(U.1) and the fill retained by that wall (U.2). Unit 1 stood a preserved 0.34m high and was backed by a fill (U.2) composed primarily of earth, indistinguishable from S.2, in which are embedded a few small cobbles. Unit 2 even contains the sizable quantities of artifacts, again dominated by sherds and *bajareque*, that characterize S.2. Unit 1 is oriented approximately 2 degrees and was made of unmodified cobbles set in a mud mortar.

#### Time Span 4

After Str. 168-11-1st was abandoned, S.2 resumed accumulating, eventually reaching thicknesses of as much as 0.61m and covering most of U.1. Capping S.2 is 0.1-0.37m of moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, root-rich dark gray-to-black soil. Embedded in S.1 is a dense to moderately dense concentration of rocks dislodged from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1's stones are particularly prevalent where they overlie Str. 168-11-1st and were traced for 1.53m east of U.1.

#### Structure 168-16

Structure 168-16 is near the center of the western building cluster, 8m south and across a patio from Str. 168-11 and connected by architecture with Strs. 168-14, 19, and 15 on the east, south, and west. Digging in Subop. 168C against the platform's north face uncovered 14.4m<sup>2</sup>, excavations being pursued to a maximum depth of 0.82m below modern ground surface outside construction; architectural fill was not probed within Subop. 168C. These investigations were directed by H. Mahan and T. Neff.

#### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2	F.2	LCLI, II
2	Str. 168-16-1st	U.1-3	-	-	LCLIII/II
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	

#### Time Span 1

Prior to the erection of Str. 168-16-1<sup>st</sup>, at least 0.55m of a moderately fine-textured, light brown, sandy soil (S.2) was deposited. Stratum 2's base was not revealed within Subop. 168C. The recovery of artifacts from S.2 points to a human occupation in the immediate area while this soil was accumulating. A particularly dense concentration of cultural materials, especially *bajareque* fragments, was found embedded in S.2 (F.2). Feature 2 extends 0.32m down from the S.1/2 interface and covers 0.76m north-south beginning 0.06m north of U.1 (see TS. 2). The behavioral significance of F.2 is unclear; it may represent fill introduced to raise and level out the terrain on which Str. 168-16-1st was built or be the remains of a building fashioned of perishable materials that was razed prior to the erection of that platform.

## Time Span 2

Structure 168-16-1st's north face is ascended by three stone-faced terraces (U.1-3) that rise above the earthen plaza floor formed by the top of S.2. Unit 1, the basal riser, is 0.1m high by 0.27m wide. Unit 2 stands 0.14m above U.1 and extends back 0.22-0.38m south to U.3 which rises 0.14m towards the summit. It may well be that U.3 defines the summit's north margin though additional investigations above and south of this riser would be needed to test this proposition.

Structure 168-16-1st, therefore, stood at least 0.38m high and was aligned approximately 249 degrees. Unit 2 is fashioned primarily of river cobbles though several cut blocks are incorporated in this terrace facing. The exposed portion of U.3 was made entirely of river cobbles. The flatter faces of all stones used to construct these walls are oriented outwards. Over 2.52m along U.1's northern exposed extent the facing consists of a basal line of masonry blocks set on end and capped by horizontally laid cut blocks that comprise the terrace tread. This mode of construction is reminiscent of building styles recorded elsewhere in the Naco valley, especially at La Sierra. All the rocks comprising U.1-3 are set in a mud mortar.

## Time Span 3

After Str. 168-16-1st's abandonment the platform was completely covered by a root-rich, very dark brown soil (S.1). Stratum 1 is as much as 0.35m thick and includes a moderately dense concentration of stones tumbled from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 is densest where it overlies U.1-3 but drops off rapidly north of construction.

## Structure 168-21

Structure 168-21 is located near the eastern edge of the western building cluster. It is linked by construction to Str. 168-16 immediately to the northwest and lies 3m north of Str. 168-22. Digging here within Subop. 168B uncovered 7.2m<sup>2</sup> on the building's north side and across a limited portion of its summit. Excavations were pursued to maximum depths of 0.38m and 1.07m below modern ground surface into and beyond construction, respectively. Two distinct building episodes were recognized in the course of this work overseen by T. Neff and H. Mahan.

## Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	Str. 168-21-Sub1	U.1-2	-	-	LCLI?
2	Strr. 168-21-Sub1	U.3	-	-	LCL II?
3	-	-	S.2	-	LCLII/III?
4	Str. 168-21-1st	U.4-6	-	-	LCLIII/II

5	Str. 168-21-1st	U.7	-	-	LCLIII/II
6	-	-	S.1	F.1	

### Time Span 1

The exposed portion of Str. 168-21-Sub1 consists of two apparent terraces (U.1, 2) that ascend to the north. Only the stone-surfaced tread of U.1 was exposed stretching 1.4m south of U.2. The latter is the next ascending riser, standing 0.58m above U.1 and running at least 0.8m to the north. The stones from which U.1 and 2 were made consist of unmodified cobbles, their flat faces oriented outwards, set in a mud mortar.

### Time Span 2

Unit 3 consists of a dense concentration of small to large cobbles set in a fine-textured, loosely compacted, brown soil that contains numerous small (0.01m or less in diameter) pebbles. This apparent fill unit is 0.29-0.36m thick where it overlies U.1, its component rocks declining in density south of that terrace. Unit 3's architectural significance is unclear though it seems to have been fill introduced to cover U.1 and all but the upper 0.22m of U.2. Whether it was deposited as part of renovations made to Str. 168-21-Sub1 or to terminate its use is eminently unclear.

### Time Span 3

Stratum 2, a fine-textured, hard-compacted, charcoal-flecked, light brown soil, next accumulated atop U.2 and 3. This layer is 0.32-0.37m thick and contains a light scattering of small to medium-size cobbles. Whether S.2 was introduced as a result of natural sedimentation or as part of purposeful in-filling prior to raising Str. 168-21-1st is uncertain.

### Time Span 4

The uncovered segment of Str. 168-21-1st's north face is ascended by two risers (U.4 and 5). The basal step, U.4, stands 0.38m above the top of S.2 and extends 1.33m back to the south. Here it is succeeded by U.5 which rises 0.3m above U.4 and runs at least 0.54m southward. Unit 5 may define the summit's northern margin though this interpretation cannot be supported with the available date. The limited portion of the fill exposed backing U.4 on the south consists of small cobbles set in a light brown soil (U.6).

Overall, Str. 168-21-1st is a stone-faced, earth-and-stone-filled platform that stands at least 0.68m high and is fronted on the north by two risers that are 0.3-0.38m high and 1.33m wide. The facings are made using a mix of unmodified cobbles and a few cut blocks all set in a mud mortar.

### Time Span 5

A casually built addition, U.7, was appended to Str. 168-21-1st's north face late in the



platform's occupation sequence. Unit 7 extends 1.1m north from U.4 and obscures all but the upper-most 0.2m of that earlier riser. The addition of U.7 may have converted the two terraces on the north into three. Unlike its predecessors, however, U.7 does not have a clear northern facing.

### Time Span 6

This occupation sequence was capped by the deposition of S.1, a fine-grained, hard-compacted, root-rich, dark gray-to-black soil. Stratum 1 is 0.26-0.32m thick and contains a moderately dense to light concentration of stones dislodged from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1's rocks are densest where they overlie U.4 and 5, their frequency dropping rapidly north of construction.

### Structure 168-25

Structure 168-25 is a modest platform located in the southeast corner of the monumental plaza situated on the south margin of the western building aggregate. The edifice is 3m west of Str. 168-24 and 5m north of Str. 168-26 on the patio's east and south margins, respectively. Excavations conducted here within Subop. 168L cleared roughly 40m<sup>2</sup> in the course of uncovering all of the building. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.8m and 0.38m below modern ground surface within and beyond construction, respectively. One major construction phase was revealed in the course of this work which was overseen by H. Mahan and T. Neff.

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	Plaza Floor	U.10-12	-	-	(LCLI) LCLIII/II
2	Str. 168-25-1st	U.1-9	-	F.2	LCLIII/II
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	

### Time Span 1

Prior to the erection of Str. 168-25-1st the plaza floor that apparently fills the area bounded by Strs. 168-20, 24, 26, and 27 was laid down (see "Southern Plaza Floor" below). The first element of this construction is a tightly packed layer of medium to large cobbles (U.10). Unit 10 was found beyond Str. 168-25-1st's limits and buried beneath construction fill (U.9) under the building. Capping U.10 is a 0.06-0.19m-thick layer of small pebbles set in a fine-textured, loosely compacted, tan to light gray soil (U.11). This layer, in turn, was capped by U.12, a 0.06m-thick floor composed of numerous small (ca. 0.04m in diameter) limestone chunks set in a dark brown soil. Units 11 and 12 were not found overlying the U.10 cobbles beneath Str. 168-25-1st. It may be that it was not thought necessary to surface the patio floor where it was covered by the platform.

## Time Span 2

Probably not long after The U.10/12 floor was constructed Str. 168-25-1st was raised. It is bounded on all sides by low (0.22m high) walls fashioned of cut limestone blocks (U.1-4). The eastern of these constructions (U.1) gives way to a 1.15m-wide stone-surfaced tread that is succeeded on the west by a 0.41m-high riser (U.5) leading to the summit. The nature of that summit and the walls bounding it on the remaining sides is unclear, due in large part to looting that has damaged much of this area. The summit is tentatively estimated to have measured 3m on a side, bounded by comparable stone-faced step-ups (U.5-8), and yielded no surviving foundations or built-in furniture. It may be that the top of Str. 168-25-1st was left open, though this point is impossible to support at present. The fill retained by U.5-8 is a fine-textured, loosely compacted, tan earth containing numerous small stones (U.9). The lower 0.31-0.47m of U.9 overlying the U.10 cobble surface contains many small plaster fragments colored white and pink. These might be remnants of ancient looting which destroyed a plaster floor that formerly capped the structure or that once covered U.10. A *Spondylus*, *sp.* shell (F.2) was recovered from the top of U.9, 0.18m below the putative summit surface. Feature 2 was possibly part of a dedicatory cache disturbed during either ancient or recent vandalism.

Structure 168-25-1st is a stone-faced, stone-and-earth-filled platform that stands 0.63m high, measures 4.77m on a side, and faces out over the plaster-surfaced floor of the southern monumental plaza. The platform's summit was damaged by looting, though it seems to have measured 3x3m and may have been open and featureless. Fragments of plaster recovered from fill imply that the building may once have been surfaced with this material, possibly painted pink in some areas. A *Spondylus*, *sp.* shell found 0.18m below that summit might have been part of a dedicatory cache associated with the building's final phase. The basal walls on all four sides are made exclusively of cut limestone blocks while unmodified cobbles were used to fashion the walls that define the summit. All of the stones are set in a mud mortar.

## Time Span 3

Stratum 1, a fine-textured, hard-compacted, root-rich, dark gray-to-black soil covers much of Str. 168-25-1st. It is as much as 0.24m thick and contains a light scattering of rocks fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1). The paucity of F. 1 stones supports the notion that Str. 168-25-1st did not support a substantial superstructure built with rocks.

## Structure 168-32

Structure 168-32 is near the northern edge of the eastern building cluster, ca. 10m south of, and connected by a low terrace with, Str. 168-31 and 3m northeast of Str. 168-34. Digging here within Subop. 168J cleared 5m<sup>2</sup> along the building's east, downslope, side, excavations being pursued to maximum depths of 0.84m and 1.1m below modern ground surface within and outside architecture, respectively. Probes into construction fill were very limited, precluding our ability to infer the existence of pre-final-phase building episodes. All research in Subop. 168J was directed by H. Mahan and T. Neff.

## Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.4, 5	-	LCLII?
2	Str. 168-32-1st	U.1-7	-	-	LCLIII/II
3	-	-	S.1-4, 6	F.1	

### Time Span 1

Deposition of S.5, a fine-textured, very hard-compacted, tan soil that contains a few small pebbles, was the first activity attested to in the area of Str. 168-32-1st. Stratum 5 yielded a few artifacts within the 0.12m that it was exposed (its base lies outside excavation limits). This cultural material points to a human presence in the area while S.5 was being laid down.

The lowest 0.06m of S.4, a fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil with no pebble inclusions, overlies S.5 and runs beneath TS.2 architecture (U.1). There is no clear line distinguishing those portions of S.4 that accumulated during TS.1 from those that were deposited after Str. 168-32-1st's abandonment.

### Time Span 2

Structure 168-32-1st is fronted on the east by three stone faced risers (U.1-3) that ascend in increments of 0.34m, 0.42m, and 0.4m to the summit. Unit 1 and 2 are 0.98m and 0.85m wide, respectively; U.3 is the step-up to the summit. The fill retained by U. 1 and 2 is a fine-grained, hard-compacted, dark gray soil in which numerous small to medium-size stones are embedded (U.7).

Located 0.62m west of U.3 is the eastern summit foundation wall (U.4). The latter is 0.44m high by the same distance wide. One meter north of U.4's southernmost exposure in Subop. 168J is what seems to be a doorway into the superstructure. Bounded on the south by U.5, a 0.36m-high stone wall that extends 0.77m north of U.4, this entryway was apparently surfaced with stones (U.6). The door's dimensions are unknown.

Structure 168-32-1st is a 1.16m-high structure that is fronted by three stone-faced risers on the east. These ascents are 0.34-0.42m high by 0.62-0.98m wide and lead up to a superstructure with sizable (0.44m high and wide) stone foundations. A door facing east over the aforementioned ascents breaches the eastern footing and was surfaced with stone; how much of the superstructure's interior might have been paved remains unknown. The exposed portions of fill consist of stones set in a dark gray soil matrix whereas the uncovered facings and foundations were made using unmodified river cobbles packed round with a mud mortar. Terrace treads and exposed portions of the summit east of the superstructure are covered with a mix of stones and earth.

### Time Span 3

Following abandonment, Str. 168-32-1st was gradually covered by a complex mix of

soils. First to be deposited is the remaining 0.28m of S.4 that covers U.1. Next to be introduced is a 0.1m-thick lens of fine-textured, hard-compacted, pebble-rich soil (S.3) that pinches out 0.25m west of U.1's east margin. Stratum 3 rests atop U.1 and extends 2m eastward where it exits our excavations. Throughout its exposed extent of 2.25m, S.3 remains relatively flat. Stratum 2, a layer identical to S.3 but lacking its pebble-enriched content, blankets S.3 by 0.27-0.46m and covers all but the uppermost 0.1m of U.3 and 0.19m of U.4. Capping this sequence are two soils resting at the same level. Stratum 1, a 0.15m-thick loosely compacted tan soil that contains many small (0.01m< in diameter) pebbles, extends 2.34-2.5m west from the eastern end of Subop. 168J. Here it is succeeded by S.6, a fine-textured, hard-compacted, dark gray to black soil with very few included pebbles. Stratum 6 continues upslope over Str. 168-32-1st and is 0.09-0.2m thick. Embedded within S.2-4 and 6 is a dense concentration of small to medium-size stones dislodged from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 extends at least 0.55m east of U.1, Str. 168-32-1st's east basal facing.

### Structure 168-40

Structure 168-40 is the largest surviving edifice in the eastern building aggregate. It sits on the southwest margin of this group, built into land that rises fairly rapidly west-to-east towards the bordering hills. Structures 168-39 and 41 are 7m and 11m to the north and southeast, respectively. Digging here within Subop. 168I and K cleared 3m<sup>2</sup> and 6.1m<sup>2</sup> of Str. 168-40's east and west flanks, respectively, excavations being pursued to a maximum depth of 1.08m below modern ground surface outside construction; architectural fill was not investigated in either trench. The work was directed by H. Mahan and T. Neff.

### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2, 3	-	LCLI, II
2	Str. 168-40-1st	U.1-6	-	-	LCLIII/II
3	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

### Time Span 1

The earliest activity identified in the environs of Str. 168-40-1st is the apparent natural deposition of a coarse-textured, hard-compacted, tan soil containing numerous small (0.01m< in diameter) pebbles and a few small to medium-size cobbles (S.3). Stratum 3 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.47m, though its base was not encountered. Very few artifacts were encountered in S.3, implying an equally sparse human occupation of the area while this soil was accumulating. Somewhere between 0.04-0.06m of S.2, a fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil, overlies S.3 and runs under TS. 2 architecture. As there is no clear border separating lower and upper S.2, it is not possible to say whether artifacts found near the S.2/3 interface pertain to TS.1 or if they worked their way down from higher levels.

## Time Span 2

Structure 168-40-1st's west flank is ascended by three stone-faced terraces (U.1, 2, and 5). The basal riser (U.5) is 0.3m high and runs 0.94m back to the east where it is succeeded by the next ascending terrace, U.1. The latter is 0.22m tall and its tread extends 0.42m to the east where it ends at U.2. The latter stands 0.3m above U.1 and is 0.88m wide. Unit 3 likely represents the final step-up to the summit, rising 0.2m above U.2. Excavations were pursued for 0.77m east of U.3 across the summit before being brought to an end. The building's east, upslope face is defined by U.4, a 0.18m-high stone-faced riser that gives way to an earth-and-stone-surfaced tread that is at least 1.6m wide (digging ceased at this point). The only portion of architectural fill (U.6) revealed in the course of this work backs U.5 on the east. Unit 6 is a fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil containing a few small to medium-size cobbles.

Structure 168-40-1st is a stone-faced building that stands 1.02m high on the west and at least 0.18m tall on the east and is aligned roughly 346 degrees. One low riser was revealed on the east giving way to a terrace tread that was at least 1.6m across. The western flank was ascended by four risers 0.2-0.3m high; the lower three terraces are 0.94m, 0.42m, and 0.88m wide, respectively, and give way to the 0.2m-tall ascent to the summit. Terrace treads were surfaced with a combination of earth and stones whereas the risers were made of unmodified stones the flatter faces of which were generally oriented outwards. All rocks used in construction were set in a mud mortar.

## Time Span 3

After Str. 168-40-1st was abandoned much of its basal architecture (U.1, 4, and 5) was covered by continued deposition of S.2. Stratum 2 contains many fewer pebbles than were found in its predecessor, S.3. The portions of S.2 laid down during TS.3 were 0.38m thick and were capped, in turn, by S.1, a fine-textured, hard-compacted, root-rich, dark gray-to-black soil that is 0.08-0.32m thick. Embedded within S.1 and upper S.2 is a moderately dense concentration of stones fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 was traced for 1.66m and 1.04m east and west of construction, respectively, before excavations ceased.

## Southern Plaza Floor and Structure 168-26-1st

The surface of the southern plaza delimited by monumental platforms Str. 168-20, 23, 24, 26, and 27 was investigated through excavations conducted within Subop. 168G, H, M, and N; Subop. 168 G and H together extend 6.25m north from Str. 168-26, Subop. 168M is a 1m<sup>2</sup> test pit dug near the plaza's center, and Subop. 168N is a 1x2m trench placed in the plaza's northwest corner. Fully 9.25m<sup>2</sup> were cleared in the course of this work, digging being pursued to a maximum depth of 1.25m below modern ground surface though most excavations were designed to uncover the ultimate plaster floor, 0.13-0.18m below current ground level. All of these investigations were directed by H. Mahan and T. Neff.

## Time Spans

Time	Construction
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<u>Span</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2	-	?
2	Str. 168-26-1st Southern Plaza Floor	U.1, 2 U.1-3	-	-	LCLIII/II?
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	

### Time Span 1

At least 0.44m of S.2, a moderately fine-textured, light brown soil, was laid down prior to the construction of the southern plaza floor and Str. 168-26-1st. The general paucity of cultural remains retrieved from this level imply an equally scarce human occupation in the immediate area while this soil was accumulating. It is equally likely, however, that S.2 represents fill purposefully introduced to prepare the area for later construction and that it was mined from deposits containing few artifacts.

### Time Span 2

The first activity dated to this span is the laying down of a surface composed of large, unmodified river cobbles (U.1). Capping this level is as much as 0.12m of a moderately fine-textured brown soil (U.2). This deposit, in turn, is sealed by a 0.03-0.14m-thick floor composed of crushed limestone fragments that average 0.03m in diameter (U.3). Unit 3 was found throughout excavations conducted in the plaza (see Str. 168-25-1st above); U.1 and 2 were also generally found underlying U.3 save in the area immediately north of Str. 168-26-1st where they were not recorded. It may be that U.1 and 2 were introduced to level out the surface on which U.3 was laid, these stones and earth being omitted in higher portions of the plaza.

The only segment of Str. 168-26-1st that was revealed consists of two narrow terraces (U.1 and 2) on the building's north flank. Unit 1, the basal riser, is 0.38m high by 0.28m wide and is succeeded on the south by U.2. The latter stands at least 0.32m above U.1 though we stopped excavations before ascertaining this riser's full dimensions. Unit 1 rests on the U.3 plaster floor, suggesting that the last version of Str. 168-26-1st was built after the southern plaza floor was completed. Units 1 and 2 of Str. 168-26-1st are made using unmodified stones whose flatter faces are directed outwards. The one exception consists of those limestone cut blocks that cap the U.1 riser. Based on examinations of Str. 168-26-1st's surface, it appears that this line of cut blocks encircles the entire platform at the same level. The U.1 and 2 stones are all set in a mud mortar.

The southern plaza floor covers ca. 550m<sup>2</sup> and, based on excavations within Subop. 168G, H, M, and N, was surfaced with a crushed limestone floor underlain in most areas by a thin (0.12m-thick) layer of earth overlying a pavement composed of large cobbles. Structure 168-26-1st, like Str. 168-25-1st in the patio's southeast corner, was raised atop this limestone floor. The former building was apparently ascended on its north, plaza facing side by a sequence of terraces at least the bottom-most of which was capped by masonry blocks.

### Time Span 3

Following abandonment, the southern plaza floor and Str. 168-26-1st were blanketed by a dark gray to black, root-rich soil (S.1). Stratum 1 accumulated to as much as 0.32m thick against Str. 168-26-1st's north basal wall (U.1) but generally covered the patio floor by 0.13-0.18m. Embedded within S.1 on the southern plaza margin were a few scattered stones dislodged from Str. 168-26-1st's final-phase architecture (F.1).

### Monument 1

Monument 1 is in the northeast corner of the southern plaza ca. 5m east of Str. 168-23 and an equal distance west of Str. 168-20. Excavations here within Subop.168F uncovered 6.34m<sup>2</sup> around Monument 1, digging being pursued to a maximum depth of 0.97m below modern ground surface. All of these investigations were supervised by H. Mahan and T. Neff.

### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2	-	LCLI?
2	Monument 1	U.1, 2	-	F.2	LCLIII/II
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	

### Time Span 1

The earliest activity for which evidence remains in the environs of Monument 1 is the deposition of S.2, a moderately fine-textured, light brown soil in which small to medium-size river-rounded stones were found. Stratum 2 was revealed to a maximum thickness of 0.49m, though its base lies beyond excavation limits. The near absence of artifacts within S.2 suggests that there was either a slight human presence in the area when this soil was accumulating or that it represents fill secured from a source that was almost devoid of cultural material.

### Time Span 2

During this interval, the surface recorded elsewhere in the southern plaza was constructed. Unit 1, a 0.1m-thick layer of gray-brown sandy soil with numerous small pebbles, is equivalent to the sub-floor deposits recognized elsewhere in the plaza (U.11 beneath Str. 168-25-1st and U.2 in the Southern Plaza Excavations described above). Capping U.1 is a 0.07-0.14m-thick floor composed of crushed limestone fragments set in a gray soil matrix (U.2). Once more, U.2 is very similar to the crushed limestone surface recorded throughout the southern patio. Monument 1, a sizable uncarved stone measuring 0.6x1.5m, could not be related clearly to the floor as it was found out of place. A 0.19m-deep depression in the top of S.2 at the point where the U.2 floor pinches out on the north may mark the original location of Monument 1. Several medium to large flat-laid cobbles found within and surrounding this

declivity (F.2) may be the remains of rocks used to support the monument when it was originally set here. If so, then it appears that the crushed limestone plaza floor originally ran up to Monument 1 and that both were put in place at about the same time.

Monument 1 is, therefore, a sizable but seemingly unmodified stone measuring 0.6x1.5m that was set within a 0.19m deep by 0.7m-wide depression bounded by rocks and fronted by the crushed limestone plaza floor to the south.

### Time Span 3

After activities around Monument 1 ceased, the southern plaza floor was blanketed by as much as 0.38m of a moderately fine-textured, root-rich, dark gray-to-black soil (S.1). Stratum 1 contains a light scattering of small to medium-size cobbles (F.1) that may have fallen from the final-phase versions of nearby Strs. 168-20, 22, and 23.

### Test Pits

Six test pits, each covering 1m<sup>2</sup>, were excavated at Site 168 by N. Ross with the primary intention of recovering lithic tools and debris for his study of stone tool production and use in the Late (AD 600-800) and Terminal Classic (AD 800-1000) Naco valley (Ross 1997). These probes were scattered around the center in open areas, usually plazas. Each of the tests is briefly described below.

### Suboperation 168AA and 168AC; Monument 2

Suboperations 168AA and AC comprise a single trench measuring 1m east-west by 2m north-south (2m<sup>2</sup>) and located near the center of a plaza on the southeast edge of the western building cluster. The patio is bounded by Strs. 168-21/23 and 28. Digging was pursued to a maximum depth of 0.94m below modern ground surface.

### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.4, 5	-	LCLII?
2	Monument 2	-	-	F.1	LCLIII/II
3	-	-	S.1-3	-	

### Time Span 1

The first activity attested to in this excavation is the deposition of S.5, a coarse-textured, loosely compacted, dark gray-brown (10YR 3/2), silty sand. Stratum 5 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.18m, its base lying beyond our excavation limits. Portions of S.5's preserved upper surface appear to have been truncated, suggesting that later digging penetrated



this level by roughly 0.12m (see TS.2, below).

Capping S.5 is a hard-compacted, dark gray (10YR 3/2), sandy silt that is as much as 0.54m thick. Even more so than its predecessor, S.4 seems to have been cut through; the layer is restricted to the northern 0.62m of Subop. 168AA/AC, its south side marked by a steep decline, dropping 0.54m over 0.23m from north to south. Once again, this truncation looks to be the result of a cut made through S.4 that removed much of this soil and extended into the underlying S.5.

Both S.4 and 5 contain small to medium-size stones, most of which are river-worn. Artifacts were also retrieved from these layers pointing to a human presence in the vicinity while S.4 and 5 were being deposited.

### Time Span 2

The cause of the aforementioned disruptions of S.4 and 5 was the digging of a pit (F.1) 0.54-0.58m deep by at least 0.7m across (its west and south sides were not revealed). The purpose of this excavation is unclear. A large limestone fragment (tentatively designated Monument 2) measuring 0.94m long by at least 0.3m across was found lying 0.22m south of F.1. The stone tilts down from south to north, its base located within, and sitting 0.16m above the base of, F.1. It may be that this sizable rock originally served as an uncarved monument set within F.1. The concentration of cobbles noted along the near-vertical edge of F.1, within S.5, might have been used to reinforce the sides of the pit and thus help to maintain the stone in a vertical position. If this is the case, then it is likely that the 0.16m of S.3 that intervenes between the rock's base and the bottom of F.1 was packed around the stem of the putative monument. Stratum 3 is a loamy silt that is mottled dark brown and dark gray (10YR 3/2 and 3/3) and which contains numerous small pebbles (averaging 0.02m in diameter) along with small to large stones. Monument 2 would have been very approximately 12m northeast of Monument 1.

### Time Span 3

Following the abandonment of F.1 it filled with several different sediments. Stratum 3 (see TS.2) continued to accumulate, approximately 0.22-0.3m collecting during this interval. Stratum 2, a mottled dark gray to dark brown (10YR 3/3, 3/2) loamy silt with fewer included pebbles than seen in S.3 but an equivalent number of small cobbles, blankets S.3 by 0.2-0.31m. Stratum 2 covers S.5 and gives way to S.1, a 0.2-0.22m thick, very dark gray (10YR 3/1) slightly clayey, root rich soil. The latter contains very few rocks of any sort. As noted in the discussion of TS.2, a large piece of limestone 0.94m long by 0.3m across cross-cuts S.1-3 and was apparently exposed throughout most of the interval while these soils were accumulating. No structure from which this rock might have derived was noted, its considerable size implying that it had not traveled far en route to its final resting place. As recounted in the discussion of TS.2, the size and position of the stone tentatively imply that it originally stood upright in the F.1 pit. It was apparently dislodged from its initial vertical position and left lying on the ancient earthen plaza surface, eventually to be buried by the gradual accumulation of S.1-3.

### Suboperation 168AB

Suboperation 168AB is a 1m<sup>2</sup> pit dug in the plaza defined by Strs. 168-15 and 17/20 within the western building cluster. The probe is 1.5m east of Str. 168-17 and 4.7m south of Str. 168-15. Digging here was pursued to a maximum depth of 1m below modern ground surface.

### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.7	-	
2	-	-	S.6	F.2	LCLII?
3	-	-	S.4	-	LCLII?
4	-	-	S.2, 3, 5	-	LCLIII/II
5	-	-	-	F.1	LCLIII, EPC
6	-	-	S.1	-	

### Time Span 1

The first activity represented in Subop. 168AB is the apparent natural deposition of S.7, a dark brown-to-medium brown (10YR 3/3 and 4/3) clayey sand containing numerous pebbles and a dense concentration of small cobbles. Stratum 7 was revealed at the base of excavation to a maximum thickness of 0.2m. It is unclear whether the cobbles within S.7 were introduced by natural processes or were intentionally placed to form a rough floor or a setting for the burial dating to TS.2. Not enough of S.7 was uncovered to determine if it contained cultural material.

### Time Span 2

A 0.18m-deep pit containing the tightly flexed remains of a single individual (F.2) was dug into S.7. The western 0.4m of F.2, consisting of the lower limbs, feet and pelvis, was revealed in Subop. 168AB; the burial continued for an undetermined distance to the east. No grave goods were clearly associated with the interment. Feature 2 rests atop the aforementioned cobbles recorded within S.7 and was embedded within, and covered by, a dark brown (10YR 3/3) clayey silt (S.6) containing numerous small pebbles. Stratum 6 is 0.18m thick and apparently filled the F.2 pit.

### Time Span 3

Stratum 4, a hard-compacted, dark brown (10YR 3/3) silt with included ash, covers F.2 and S.6 by as much as 0.3m. Stratum 4 may well be a continuation of S.6, the two being distinguished by the greater ash content of S.4 *vis a vis* S.6. Artifacts retrieved from S.4 indicate human activity in the vicinity while it was being laid down; this soil may have been fill

intended to cover the F.2 burial. At some point following its deposition, S.4 was cut into, this excavation reaching S.7. The line of the ancient excavation is clearest on the north where S.4 ends in a vertical line 0.47m south of the north end of the Subop. 168AB. The cut's eastern edge is more gradual, S.4 dropping 0.18m over 0.4m west-to east. It was not possible to determine the dimensions of the ancient excavation as its west and south limits were not encountered. It may be, therefore, that S. 4 and 6 were originally introduced to cover the F.2 burial, some later activity resulting in the truncation of S.4 to within 0.18m of F.2. What that activity might have been is unclear; it was possibly the result of natural forces though the vertical wall on the excavation's north flank tentatively implies that we are looking at the remains of a purposefully dug pit.

#### Time Span 4

The declivity within S.4 filled during the next interval. A dark brown (10YR 3/3) clayey sand with many pebbles (S.5) was the first soil to accumulate in the area, reaching a maximum thickness of 0.1m in the northern part of the depression. Stratum 5 is limited to the northern part of the declivity; this soil level and the remainder of the ancient excavation were covered by a dark brown (10YR 3/3), clayey silt (S.3) that accumulated to a maximum thickness of 0.21m. Capping S.3 is 0.36m of S.2, a dark brown (10YR 3/3) loamy silt containing pebbles. Artifacts recovered from S.2, 3, and 5 point to a human presence in the area while these soils were accumulating.

#### Time Span 5

Set on top of S.2 is F.1. The latter is a 0.08m-thick layer of scattered, flat-laid, small cobbles with which were found numerous, relatively large, horizontally disposed ceramic fragments. What behaviors resulted in the creation of F.1 are unclear. The stones are not continuous enough to constitute an obvious floor and it may be that F.1 represents trash deposited atop the earthen plaza floor bounded by Strs. 168-15 and 17/20.

#### Time Span 6

Blanketing F.1 is S.1, a 0.28m-thick deposit of very dark gray (10YR 3/1-2) silt. Stratum 1 apparently accumulated during the period following the plaza's abandonment.

#### Suboperation 168AD: Structure 168-Sub1

Suboperation 168AD is a 1m<sup>2</sup> test pit dug into the plaza defined by Strs. 168-3, 4, 6/8 on the northern edge of the western building cluster. The probe is 2.5m north of Str. 168-8 and 2m east of Str. 168-3 in the southwest quadrant of the patio. Digging here reached a maximum depth of 1.1m below modern ground surface.

#### Time Spans

<u>Time</u> <u>Span</u>	<u>Construction</u> <u>Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
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1	-	-	S.5	-	LCLII/I
2	-	-	S.4	F.1	LCLII/I
3	-	-	S.3	-	LCLII?
4	Str. 168-Sub1	U.1	-	-	LCLII/III
5	-	-	S.1, 2	F.2	

### Time Span 1

Deposition of S.5, a brown (10YR 4/3), sandy silt that contains pebbles but no cultural material, is the first recorded activity revealed within Subop. 168AD. Stratum 5 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.2m, its base lying beyond excavation limits. The upper surface of S.5 is uneven, the layer dipping 0.18m over ca. 1m south-to-north. Though relations between S.5 and the overlying soils are unclear it appears that the former may have been dug into during the creation of F.1 (see TS. 2).

### Time Span 2

Blanketing S.5 by 0.02m to more than 0.2m is a brown (10YR 4/3) silt mottled with light gray (10YR 7/2) ash (S.4; the base of S.4 was not revealed in all places throughout Subop. 168AD). It appears that S.4 consists of debris deposited within the pit dug into underlying S.5. Blanketing S.4 is a 0.03-0.22m-thick deposit of light gray (10YR 7/2) ash containing numerous artifacts along with bone and *Pachchilus*, *sp.* shells (F.1). For reasons that remain obscure, F.1 pinches out towards the middle of the pit's north exposure, thickening considerably to the east, west, and south. Feature 1 is definitely midden material, apparently deposited within the pit originally dug into S.5. It may be that S.4 and F.1 constitute different, sequential episodes of trash disposal within the aforementioned declivity.

### Time Span 3

Feature 1 is covered by 0.12-0.4m of dark brown (10YR 3/3) sandy silt (S.3). Artifacts unearthed within S.3 point to a human presence in the area while this soil was accumulating. Stratum 3 may have been deposited by natural means. Given its association with U.1 (see TS.4), it is equally likely that this earth was introduced as fill to seal the F.1 midden prior to the erection of Str. 168-Sub1.

### Time Span 4

Set within the topmost 0.12m of S.3 is a line of cobbles (U.1) that was apparently either a facing for a low platform or part of a foundation from a surface-level building (Str. 168-Sub1 in either case). Unit 1 is 0.12m high and runs approximately due north-south. Suboperation 168AD cleared the construction's east face and traced the wall for 1m of its total length. The

stones making up U.1 are unmodified rocks whose flatter faces are directed outwards; the stones are set in a mud mortar. Though it is impossible to link this building definitively to other architectural sequences at the site, U.1's depth and relation to overlying soils (S.1 and 2) imply that it is roughly contemporary with the final phases of those edifices investigated during the 1988 field season.

### Time Span 5

After Str. 168-Sub1 was abandoned, it was covered by two soil levels. The first of these, S.2, is a dark gray-brown (10YR 3/2) silt that blankets the construction by 0.12m. Capping the stratigraphic sequence here is S.1, a 0.31m-thick dark gray-brown (10YR 3/1-2) silt. Embedded primarily in S.2 is a light scattering of small stones that likely derive from decaying architecture in the area. Some may have come from Str. 168-Sub1 though, given Subop. 168AD's proximity to Strs. 168-3 and 8, it is likely that F.2 includes rocks fallen from those buildings as well. If this is the case, then the stratigraphic relations between F.2 and U.1, the former resting 0.02m or less above the latter, suggests that Str. 168-Sub1 was abandoned at about the same time as its larger neighbors were left to decay.

### Suboperation 168AE

Suboperation 168AE is a 1m<sup>2</sup> test pit located in the plaza bordered by Strs. 168-10, 11, 14/16. It is 1m south of Str. 168-11 and 3.2m west of Str. 168-14. Digging here reached a maximum depth of 0.98m below modern ground surface.

### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.3, 4	-	
2	-	-	S.2	-	LCLIII/II
3	-	-	-	F.1	LCLIII/II?
4	-	-	S.1, 2	-	

### Time Span 1

A dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty sand containing numerous pebbles and small to medium-size cobbles (S.4) is the earliest soil layer recorded in the Subop. 168AE sequence. Stratum 4 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.31m though its base was not encountered. Overlying the northern revealed 0.7m of S.4 is a very dark gray-brown (10YR 3/2) hard-compacted slightly sandy silt (S.3). Stratum 3 dips down 0.24m north-to-south over the 0.7m it was exposed, pinching out atop S.4 on the south. Both S.3 and 4 are devoid of cultural material and appear to have been introduced by natural means.

### Time Span 2

Artifacts were retrieved from overlying S.2, a dark brown (10YR 3/2-3) slightly clayey silt. Approximately 0.27m of S.2 was laid down now.

### Time Span 3

Feature 1 is a light scattering of medium to small stones intermixed with a particularly dense concentration of artifacts, especially sherds, many of which were flat-laid. Though F.1's behavioral significance is far from clear, it most likely represents debris associated with activities pursued within the plaza and/or its neighboring buildings. The rocks in question do not form clear lines or a floor and may simply be fallen debris from nearby structures. Feature 1 is embedded in the upper-most 0.25m of S.2.

### Time Span 4

Feature 1 and S.2 are covered by 0.27m of S.1, a very dark gray (10YR 3/1) silt. Artifacts found in this layer likely comprise debris associated with the final-phase occupation of the plaza and its surrounding edifices.

### Suboperation 168AF

Suboperation 168AF is a 1m<sup>2</sup> test pit located ca. 3.5m east of Str. 168-12's northeast corner in the apparently open terrain off the northeast edge of the western structure aggregate. Digging here achieved a maximum depth of 0.56m below modern ground surface.

### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2	-	LCLIII/II
2	-	-	S.1	-	

### Time Span 1

The earliest activity identified in Subop. 168AF is the deposition of S.2, a dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty sand containing numerous pebbles and cobbles of various sizes. Stratum 2 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.07m and may well have been introduced by natural means; a cultural origin for the layer, possibly as part of a floor, cannot be ruled out, however.

### Time Span 2

Blanketing S.2 by 0.49m is a dark gray-brown (10YR 3/2) slightly sandy silt that contains

a few scattered stones along with artifacts. These rocks and cultural materials almost certainly originated on and around nearby Str. 168-12, having migrated to their place of discovery in the centuries following that building's abandonment.

### Chronological Summary

The earliest period of activity attested at Site 168 dates to Late Classic I. Diagnostics pertaining to this interval are found underlying later architecture in the environs of Str. 168-11, 168-16, 168-21, 168-25, 168-40, and Monument 1. Aside from Str. 168-21-Sub1, which may have been raised now, Late Classic I artifacts are not associated with architecture. In fact, markers of this period are nearly ubiquitous but never very numerous. It would appear that Late Classic I occupation at the center was widespread but may not have involved large populations or significant investment of labor in construction projects. As best we can discern, the Late Classic II witnessed a gradual increase in cultural activity and population over that seen in the preceding interval. Items dating to this span are found at just about all of the locales excavated at Site 106, including Str. 168-7, 168-11, 168-16, 168-21, 168-32, 168-40, and Monument 2. No architecture is clearly dated to this span though it is likely that early versions of the aforementioned platforms were erected now. The final stages of those constructions were seemingly all raised during the Late Classic III/II transition, continuing in use into Late Classic III. Monuments 1 and 2 were apparently erected now and the plaza surfaces with which they and Str. 168-25-1st and 168-26-1st are associated were laid out at this time. The very end of Late Classic II and all of Late Classic III seem to represent the major periods of occupation and building at Site 168. Scant evidence of an Early Postclassic presence at the center was recovered from Subop. 168AB, a test pit sunk in the southwest part of the settlement's western agglomeration. No architecture dating to this span was identified and it appears that Early Postclassic use of the site was slight, short-lived, or, more likely, both. No Late Postclassic diagnostics were recognized in the analyzed artifact sample from Site 168.